

STATE SENATOR

*Bruce Patterson*SERVING THE 7TH DISTRICT**WHAT'S INSIDE**

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/gop/senator/patterson****SENIOR UPDATE . . .**

Dear Friend:

It is a pleasure to serve you and the residents of the 7th District in the Michigan State Senate. As your link to state government, I want to share some information in this newsletter on issues and services that may affect you.

Every year, Michigan seniors and their families face new challenges. The rising cost of health care, safety and security, and consumer issues cause ongoing concern for seniors and families across the state. Michigan has made tremendous progress, but there is still work to be done.

My role at the State Capitol is to ensure that your voice is heard. It is important that you share your thoughts and concerns with me so I may better represent your needs. I look forward to hearing from you or seeing you in the district soon!

Sincerely,

Bruce Patterson
State Senator
7th District



Senator Patterson has lunch with area seniors over the summer. Talking with constituents is a favorite part of his job. Please contact his office at (866) 262-7307 if you would like Senator Patterson to come and speak at your senior center or senior event.



Hang Up On Unwanted Telemarketing Calls

Has your dinner or family time been interrupted by unwanted telemarketing calls? Have you hurried to get to the phone, expecting an important call, only to find that someone selling a product or service you don't want or didn't order is on the line? Relief is on the way! The national Do-Not-Call registry is open for business and accepting registration free of charge by phone and by the internet.

Since sign-up started in late June, millions of consumers have enrolled in the registry. To join them, call toll-free 1-888-382-1222. You must call from the phone you wish to register. Or register online at: www.donotcall.gov.

Late last year, the Michigan Legislature passed a bill to restrict telemarketers and create a Do-Not-Call list. I voted in support of this important consumer

protection legislation. The state plan also called for the adoption of a national registry to provide both state and federal protection in one simple list.

In fact, enforcement of the Do-Not-Call registry will be handled by both the Michigan Attorney General and the Federal Trade Commission. You can file a complaint with both agencies against telemarketers who ignore the registry when enforcement begins on October 1, 2003.

In the meantime, Do-Not-Call registration is available only through the Federal Trade Commission. Consumers who receive phone calls from private companies attempting to collect information should beware of fraudulent practices and report the individuals to either the Attorney General or the Federal Trade Commission.

Toll-Free Numbers

American Health Care Assoc.

1-800-321-0343

American Heart Assoc.

1-800-968-1793

American Lung Assoc.

1-800-678-5864

Arthritis Foundation

1-800-283-7800

Elder Abuse Hotline

1-800-996-6228

Elder Care Locator

1-800-677-1116

Energy Assistance

1-800-292-5650

Legal Hotline for Seniors

1-800-347-5297

Long Term Care

Ombudsman Program

1-800-292-7852

National Health

Information Center

1-800-336-4797

Taxpayers Assistance (State)

1-800-487-7000

Taxpayers Information (Federal)

1-800-829-1040



President Gerald Ford Celebrates 90th Birthday!

President Gerald Ford, the 38th President of the United States, turned 90 years old on July 14, 2003. The Michigan Senate honored President Ford last month by the unanimous approval of Senate Resolution 122. The resolution acknowledges President Ford's contributions to the state of Michigan and the nation.

President Ford was sworn in as President following Richard Nixon's resignation on August 9, 1974. He is the only President to serve the United States from the state of Michigan.

In August 1999, President Ford was presented with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian award. President Ford was honored for his role in

guiding the nation through the turbulent times of Watergate, the Nixon resignation, and the end of the Vietnam War. The President's legacy continues in Michigan through the Gerald R. Ford Library in Ann Arbor and the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids. He also has been honored by the University of Michigan through the establishment of the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy.

President Ford is the fourth President of the United States to reach the age of 90. He joins President John Adams (1735-1826), President Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), and President Ronald Reagan (1911-).

Higher Natural Gas Costs Coming This Winter

The Michigan Public Service Commission is urging natural gas consumers to prepare for higher bills this winter. Consumers could see an increase of \$9.00 to \$29.00 a month over the winter if normal weather conditions prevail. Prices are rising due to the increasing demand for natural gas and depleted stored supplies. Keeping warm and safe during the winter is critical. If you need assistance in paying your home heating bills, please consider some of the following options:

- Sign up for a budget payment plan, which enables consumers to pay equal monthly payments throughout the year;
- Enroll in the Winter Protection Plan, which protects seniors and low-income customers of Commission-regulated natural gas companies from natural gas service shutoff and high utility payments between December 1 and March 31;
- Apply for a home heating credit. If you are low-income, receiving public assistance, or receiving unemployment compensation, you may be eligible to receive \$150 or more to help pay your winter heating bills;
- Seek assistance from the State Emergency Relief Program through your local Family Independence Agency, or by calling toll-free 1-800-292-5650. The program low-income households pay part of their heating bills; or
- Contact The Heat and Warmth Fund (T.H.A.W.), which provides bill payment assistance to residents in 65 Michigan counties, by calling toll-free 1-800-866-THAW (8429).

For further information on how to save money on your natural gas bills, please contact my office at (866) 262-7307 for a copy of the Consumer Alert on Natural Gas Prices from the Michigan Public Service Commission.

Medication Checklist

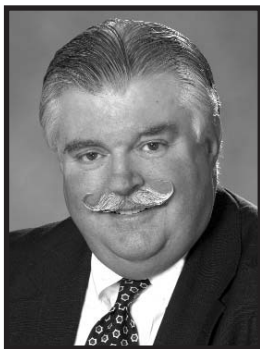
For your safety, ask your doctor or health care provider for information on your prescription drugs. Having all the facts will help keep you informed about the medicine you are taking and ensure the medications are working the way the doctors intended.

- What is the name of the medicine and how is it supposed to help me?
- How and when do I take the medicine and for how long?
- Are there any foods, drinks, or other medicines or activities I should avoid while taking the medicine?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if they occur?
- Will this prescription work safely with other medicines I'm taking, including nonprescription drugs?



Senator Patterson visits with area seniors.

If you have difficulty paying for your prescription drugs, you may be able to find assistance with Michigan's Elder Prescription Insurance Coverage (EPIC) program. Please call the EPIC hotline toll-free at 1-866-747-5844 for more information. There are also many cost-saving programs offered by individual pharmaceutical companies. Some of the patient assistance programs are directed at seniors and low-income individuals. For more information, please contact my office toll-free at (866) 262-7307.



State Senator

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New! Health Facility Complaint Form

Ensuring that residents of Michigan nursing homes receive quality health care has been made easier through the creation of a new complaint form. Legislation signed into law earlier this year requires a uniform complaint form for all nursing homes in Michigan. This single form will make it easier to detect patterns of abuse. In addition, the new law requires the easy availability of complaint information pamphlets for patients and their families.

To obtain a "Resident Care Nursing Home Complaint Form" and information brochure, please contact my office toll-free at (866) 262-7307, or call the Michigan Department of Consumer and Industry Services toll-free at: 1-800-882-6006.

Order Your Michigan Travel Ideas Guide



A free copy of the beautiful 2003 Official State of Michigan Travel Guide is available by contacting my office toll-free at: (866) 262-7307. The guide serves as an outstanding four-season resource for Michigan residents and tourists, by providing information on where to plan your next vacation or scenic drive.

----- Clip & Mail -----

Publications Available:

As a service, my office maintains a collection of useful publications that may be of interest to you.

Requests will be mailed to you by filling out the following form:

☐ Peace of Mind

A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Medical and Legal Decisions

☐ State of Michigan Road Map

☐ Services for Seniors

☐ Consumer Protection Resource Guide



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City: _____ Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____

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